

THE PRESS.

OFFICE, 14 WEST FOURTH-STREET.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12

SIX CENTS WILL PAY FOR THE PENNY PRESS ONE WEEK.

WONDERS WILL NEVER CEASE.

[CONCLUSION.]

A wild bee, that is a bumble-bee, entering a room, gives warning of death. So does the crowing of a hen, so does the squeaking of a mouse behind the bed of a sick person. If the door of a hearth be closed before the mourners are all in the coaches, there will be another death in the family. If a cow breaks into your garden there will be death in your house within six months. The gentleman who sends note of this superstition adds the singular fact that it was made known to him by the breaking of three cows into his own garden, when an old house servant grieved that there would be three deaths in the family within six months—and there were. The third was that of a son-in-law, into whose garden a cow broke some weeks before he died. Nobody can die on a bed in which there are any pigeons or game fowls. This is a widespread belief, easily confirmed to the ignorant by proofs like the following, which were adduced by a Sussex laborer against a skeptic: "Look at poor Muster S—, how hard he was a dying; poor soul, he could not die any till neighbor Lutick found out how it was. Muster S— says he, 'ye be lying on game fowls, moan, surely,' and so he was. So we took 'n out o' bed and laid 'n on the floor, and he pretty soon died then!" The last thing a man longs to eat seems to be pigeon. A very respectable farmer's wife being applied to for some pigeons which a sick man fancied he could eat, said, "Ah! poor sick fellow, is he so far gone? A pigeon is generally the last thing they want. I have supplied many a one for the like purpose." If a pigeon is seen sitting on a tree, or enters a house, or from being wild grows tame, that is a sign of death. If any bird flies into a room and out again by an open window, that is a sign of death among the inmates of the house. The soul may be seen going out as a steam or a blue vapor about five minutes after death. Then every lock in the house, of boxes as well as of doors, should be unlatched. It used to be thought that the first pains of purgatory were inflicted by the opening of the soul between the hinges, saving doors and lids unlocked, and that to the departing a free, and open escape. The child, pre-matured love upon a dying, and the contending of the soul, the mother's eyes of the mother are averted.

This is an eye of holiness, but there is also the evil eye, which causes death. An old woman had a rosary of lucky stones—that is to say, of stones with holes in them—hung up in her cottage. She owned unwillingly to a friendly lady that it was meant for protection against the evil eye. "Why, Nanny," said the lady, "You surely don't believe in witches now-a-days?" "No! I don't say I do; but certainly I former times there was wizards and bizzards, and them sort o' things." "Well," answered the lady, laughing, "but you surely don't think there are any now?" "No! I don't say 'at' there are; but I do believe in a yevil eye." As to the old lady's bizzards, there is a story in Yorkshire of an ignorant person being asked if he ever said his prayers, who repeated them as follows:

"From witches and wizards and long-tailed bizzards, And creeping things that run in hedge-bottoms, Good Lord deliver us!"

Then again there are to be remembered, as part of the popular faith of the ignorant, the legends still attached to rocks and streams, and churches. Brecon Church, in Lincolnshire, stands alone on the top of a high hill with the village at its foot. They began building it within the village till they changed the site, because every night the stones laid during the day were carried up the hill top by doves.

The site and name of Winwick church was decided by a pig, who every night came crying wee-wick! wee-wick! and carried the stones in his mouth from the wrong place selected, to the ground hallowed by St. Oswald's death. The devil built the bridge at Kirby Lonsdale, and the picturesque stones in the stream below are those which he was carrying in his apron when his string broke. At Peel, in the Isle of Man, a witch with a basin of water said once that the herring fleet would not return. Every ship was lost, and she was rolled down hill in a barrel set with spikes. The grass has never grown since on the barrel's track, and to this day you may "see the mark all down." The Welsh peasant hears spirit-sounds, the Cron Anwn, when the storm sounds over the mountains. Sometimes swelling like the bay of a bloodhound, the nearer they are to a man the less their voices, and the further the louder. The shriek of the Cyroneth is often heard. She is the hag of the mist, who sits in the mountain fog, with torn dishevelled hair, rank arms and claws, long black teeth in her corpse-like face, and leathery bat's wings. Her name means cold grief, and her wall freezes the blood of those who hear it. Sometimes she flaps her wings against the window-pane, and means the name of one within who has been marked for death. It is this hag who outs the torrent beds by dropping, when she is about to settle on a mountain, the huge stones she carries in her cloak as ballast when she flies. In some parts of South Wales, this hag has no sway, but it is Drenhin Llywyd, the grey king, who sits ever silent in the mist. There is a Welsh fairy, the Pwca, that is seen constantly upon the moor in the form of a handful of loose dried grass rolling before the wind. Even upon a wisp of dried grass will the fancy be set rolling. Miss Costello tells a Pyrenean legend which detects the spirit of the Lord of Orthez in two straws moving on the floor.

The fancy must and will work. The whole world is full of wonders that reveal the divine glory and goodness. Life is full of strange problems, of entanglements of love and omnia, of days of naught and weeping, that engross attention from all powers of the mind and soul. While we are ignorant we link religion to such fanciful opinions as those of which a handful has been shaken out on this leaf of paper. Teach folks a little better, let their fancy, thriving upon diet whole-some and abundant, be the steady helper to them, that it may add its quickening influence to their pleasure and their work

here, and become their hope for the hereafter. Superstition will soon vanish. All that is poetry in folk-lore may abide while there is literature in our country. As superstition, it degrades; as poetry, it raises us. For, Shakespeare's self, with every garland crown'd, Flew to those fairy climes his fancy shewn, In misty hours, his wayward sisters found, And with their tresses drew the music-mane. From them he sang, when, 'mid his bold designs, Before the feast, he uttered and against the shadowy kings of Banquo's fated line Through the dark cave in gleamy pages pass'd. But it is not worth while to drag a dying man out of his bed because we fancy he is lying upon game fowls, or to go into a church at mid-night and steal a minute cutting of lead from each diamond pane of its windows, that we may make of such cuttings a heart of lead for cure of sickness. There is too much of the heart of lead, too little of the golden heart that brings men health, in such credulity.

POPPING THE QUESTION—This is a terrible business to a timid lover—a thing which he dreads more than a tooth-pulling. A long time after he knows that his fair one has made up her mind to have him, and after she has shown him that her soul, if not "in arms," is eager for the wedding, still he approached the final business of formally popping the question covered with blushes, and trembling with fear.

In a village school, recently, when the scholars were parsing, the word was occurred in the sentence. The youngest who was up—a bright-eyed little fellow—puzzled over the word for a few minutes, and then, as a bright idea struck him, he burst out with "I can conjugate it. Positive waif, comparative waifer, superlative sealing was."

THE TRUTH.—Shelton in one of his sermons says: "An upright is always easier than a stooping posture, because it is more natural, and one part is better supported than another; so it is better to be an honest man than a knave. It is also more graceful."

A young Tennessee clergyman seems to have compressed the whole body of his sermon on "deceit" in the following: "Oh, my brethren, the snowiest shirt-front may conceal an aching bosom, and the stiffest of all rounders, encircle a throat that has many a bitter pill to swallow."

There is no little enemy. A man either hates you with his whole heart, or he don't hate you at all. This hating a little is a good deal like blowing up a powder mill a little. It's a feat that can't be done.

Physicians in India raise blisters with red hot iron, and dress them with cayenne pepper. If such treatment does not make people "smart," we don't know anything that would.

There is in every human countenance either a history or a prophecy which must sadden, or at least soften every reflecting observer.

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